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AUTHOR Upchurch, Jim; Fischer, Larry
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ABSTRACT

The cooperative agricultural programs described in this report were undertaken by John Wood Community College (JWCC) as part of a "common market" instructional delivery system, which utilizes existing community resources through contractual agreements with area schools, businesses, and government agencies. The report first provides a rationale for the "common market approach," emphasizing the need to expand educational opportunities while at the same time minimizing costs and program duplication. The remainder of the report describes seven cooperative arrangements: (1) contracting with area private colleges to provide the prerequisite and elective courses required in JWCC's agricultural associate degree programs; (2) employing personnel from local and federal agricultural agencies to teach a soil conservation course; (3) constructing an agricultural survey course around workshops conducted by university extension offices and agribusinesses; (4) contracting with area schools with laboratory facilities to provide courses requiring special equipment; (5) constructing an agricultural lab building to be shared with the University of Illinois; (6) leasing a swine confinement building at low cost from a manufacturer who maintains the structure as a product showcase; and (7) participating in a joint venture with other community colleges and the Illinois Farm Bureau to place graduates in available jobs. (JP)

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JOHN WOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
QUINCY, ILLINOIS

The COMMON MARKET CONCEPT: USING COMMUNITY BASED RESOURCES IN NEW WAYS TO DELIVER INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

Prepared by
Jim Upchurch
and
Larry Fischer

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Introduction

The beginning of a decade is a traditional time to assess the general state of an institution and attempt to judge the conditions under which it will be serving its constituency during the coming years. As we move into the 1980's, many social, economic, and political factors appear to be influencing the atmosphere in which educational institutions will be operating.

Definite environmental watermarks are visible at this critical time in our society. There is a general lack of confidence in the ability of "educators" to educate. Double digit inflation is negatively impacting the standard of living. The nation has experienced a dramatic political swing to conservatism.

Few educational leaders would disagree that operational procedures developed during the last forty years may fall woefully short of meeting the mission of the vocational programs in the near future. New educational strategies must be implemented that are creative yet pragmatic. These new directions must maintain academic integrity and maximize management of community resources.

To address these problems, John Wood Community College, the newest member of the Illinois community college system, has implemented a contractual common market concept that has expanded educational options, reduced "turf" conflicts, and avoided program duplication in a cost effective manner. While by no means a panacea, the philosophy of the "common market" is radically different from the norm. And, most importantly, the concept is very transportable to other locations and adaptable as a logical alternative to more traditional delivery systems.

Development of the College

John Wood Community College's unique evolution is due in part to the geographic isolation of an area in western Illinois which was void of public post-secondary vocational programs until 1974. For this primary reason, private and proprietary schools partially filled the need for these vocational programs. A general consensus existed among area taxpayers to not support the bond issues necessary to build a traditional campus.

As the philosophy of collaborative efforts evolved, it became obvious that there was little wisdom in restricting the joint efforts to existing local schools. Industries, state universities, state, federal, and local government agencies and social agencies were viewed as resources. Workshops, courses, and programs have been developed that take full advantage of faculty, facilities and other resources in our agriculture community.

The mission of the agriculture department is to provide quality vocational education to the students of the district. The following are examples of how that traditional goal has been achieved by using the non-traditional "common market" delivery system.

Cooperation with Private Colleges

Two major types of "common market" efforts have been developed with area private two and four-year colleges. JWCC purchases support courses for its curriculum packages and in one instance, sells its courses to a contracting school for its native students.

JWCC offers a typical two-year associate in science agriculture degree designed to transfer into a four-year baccalaureate program at state universities. Most of the support and prerequisite course-work outside the eighteen hours of agriculture offered by JWCC, may

be taken by JWCC students while attending Quincy College, a four-year liberal arts institution; Hannibal-LaGrange, a two-year liberal arts junior college; and/or Culver-Stockton, a Missouri four-year liberal arts institution. In addition, Culver-Stockton offers its students a minor in agriculture business with the coursework taught by JWCC's agriculture department.

JWCC also offers a two-year agribusiness degree with John Wood staff teaching forty-four hours of agriculture coursework "in-house" and allowing the students to use the contracted offerings in the system to complete the sixty-four hour degree.

General benefits to people of the community college district are having educational offerings not otherwise available, non-duplication of support coursework between the private and public sector, and the wise use of public funds to support quality private school offerings.

Community Resources for Course Delivery

Packaging non-traditional community resources for college courses has found a home in the JWCC agriculture department. Two of the best examples of this type of delivery are represented by the Conservation Planning course, delivered by the College on an annual basis, and the Agriculture Survey class, offered on a continual basis by the department.

The JWCC district includes both the great plain lands for which the state is famous and the northern border of the Ozark hill country. A strong need existed for a very practical course, taught by experts in soil conservation, to help farmers cope with a wide variety of erosion problems. JWCC designed a three-semester hour course with segments taught by highly qualified personnel from the local Soil and Water Conservation District along with staff from the Federal Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, and Agriculture

Stabilization and Conservation Service - all agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture. Also involved as instructors are University of Illinois County Extension Advisors, the Fish and Wildlife Biologist and Forester from the Illinois Department of Conservation, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Two Rivers Resource Conservation and Development agency. Management of this course is the responsibility of a JWCC staff member who ensures course continuity. The course is more than a forum for speakers. The entire group meets together to design the content of the class and takes an active role in setting course objectives.

The Agriculture Survey course is a one-to-four-semester hour course managed by JWCC's agriculture staff, which uses previously approved area workshops and seminars as resources. Experience has shown that dissemination of the most current agriculture information in our district is accomplished through meetings of the university extension system along with local and private agribusinesses and our own community services effort. Agriculture students may earn college credit by attending these meetings on a pre-arranged basis and doing a follow-up report for the instructor.

The benefit to the College of using this system is to offer well-defined coursework that is extremely current in the information presented.

Cooperation for Laboratory Intensive Programs

JWCC does not have traditional shop and laboratory facilities. As the need is identified for agriculture courses or full programs in mechanical areas that require a substantial amount of "hands on" training, the College has been able to respond in a cost effective

manner by contracting with area institutions.

A single course in agriculture machinery maintenance is purchased, after regular school hours, from the local Quincy Area Vocational Center, a well equipped secondary school. A full two-year program in agriculture mechanics is contracted from Spoon River College, a neighboring public community college with an excellent reputation for that type of training. JWCC students have access to the program on equal basis with the native SRC students.

The benefit to the College is access to expensive equipment at a reasonable cost to the institution. The future may bring an actual rotation of programs between JWCC and SRC for the benefit of both institutions.

Cooperation Between the Community College and the University

While the mother of the junior college system was the university, the community college with its true vocational programs and continuing education effort has had difficulty in defining its place in the higher education family. JWCC and the University of Illinois have broken new cooperative ground in a literal and figurative sense. Our cooperative working relationship is based on mutual respect which comes from understanding each other's mission and on a common desire to serve the same constituency in different manners.

The University of Illinois operates a two hundred and seventy-five acre agronomy research farm in the JWCC district. JWCC, using local and state tax monies, is presently constructing an educational building on three acres of the U of I farm. In exchange for giving JWCC the three acres of property, the University will have access to the building, using some areas in common with the community college and having exclusive use of other portions. JWCC will have access

to the farm as a learning laboratory with JWCC students observing the U of I research function in progress.

The benefits to both institutions will be considerable. The community college will have access to land laboratories with activities far in advance of typical community college farms. The community college agriculture instructors will spend the largest portion of their efforts in preparing for their courses--not maintaining a farm, as is the case in some situations.

The University will have meeting space and classrooms available on the farm site that would not be possible without the joint effort. The community college provides a workforce for the university with its interns and workstudy students. With the joint effort, the farm site will serve more people and make absolutely the best use of the taxpayer's dollar.

Collaborative Efforts with Agriculture-Industry Manufacturing

A marriage made in heaven is ideal; a relationship based on common need is sound business. Both a "marriage" and a "business arrangement" describes the underpinnings of JWCC's Swine Confinement Program.

Within the community college's district, the raising of swine is an $80,000,000 per year industry. The trend is clearly toward producing pork in confinement; thus a need exists for workers with the necessary technical and management skills. Swine confinement facilities have several inherent problems for schools. They are hard to maintain, they become obsolete as technology changes, and they are expensive.

Kirk Structures is a manufacturer of swine confinement buildings in the JWCC district and has many years of success in this evolving

industry. They are well respected; however, the business is not without its unique set of problems. Kirk Structures has found that the lack of a trained work force and a place to receive practical "hands-on" training are barriers to marketing their product. The high susceptibility of confined hogs to disease carried in from the outside has made touring of confinement operations impractical. This lack of being able to showcase a "live" operation has been considered a negative factor in marketing their product.

By working together, JWCC and Kirk Structures have joined in a contractual agreement to benefit both parties. The College leases a confinement building from the manufacturer which has been designed by JWCC as an educational facility. It includes isolated observation halls, restrooms, a workroom and a classroom with a strong media support service. The AAS and certificate programs provide a great deal of meaningful, practical, "hands on" training as well as lecture. Students view the operation from the observation hallway. They are required to shower in and out of the laboratory to work directly with the pigs.

The College received a reduced lease rate from Kirk Structures, which owns and maintains the structure and its equipment, provides faculty expertise for some courses, and actually recruits and places students with their marketing staff. The College realizes income as the feeder pigs are sold on the market, a source of projected revenue which will make the program extremely cost effective. As technology in this vocational field progresses, JWCC has the option of moving from its present structure into a more advanced facility, a feature vital for maintaining leadership in the field of swine confinement education.

The industry has a marketing feature as part of the agreement. Kirk salesmen can show their building and equipment in full operation by using the observation hall. The JWCC program is thereby made visible to customers who are interested in more technical training. Some of the main barriers to sales are gradually being eliminated.

Both parties benefit as the symbiotic relationship provides for the needs of the industry and the College, allowing each to do something that could not be done without the other. A true hog heaven!

Cooperation for Student Placement

The creditability of vocational agriculture programs depends on the ability of the educational institution to provide students with the knowledge, skills and competencies which agriculture businesses require. A unique pilot program between nine Illinois community colleges and the Illinois Farm Bureau is being tested during 1980-81 to provide the agriculture industry with students who are better qualified for specific job responsibilities. Although the primary objective of this cooperative project is to increase student placement, an additional positive feature is that it will increase the visibility of specific agriculture programs to a target audience-namely the farmer and related agribusinesses.

This project requires graduating students from the nine cooperating Illinois community colleges to complete employment forms provided by the Illinois Farm Bureau. Each graduating student will also be evaluated by a community college agriculture instructor as concerns the student's employee characteristics. It will then be the responsibility of the Illinois Farm Bureau to match specific employer needs to student availability.

Although the concept of close working relations would seem logical between employers in agriculture and educational institutions, the approach of working directly with an organization which collectively represents farmers'and agribusiness' interests has not been pursued to great depth. This effort will bring together previously unmatched resources to accomplish a primary objective of increasing student placement and meeting employer needs.

Conclusion

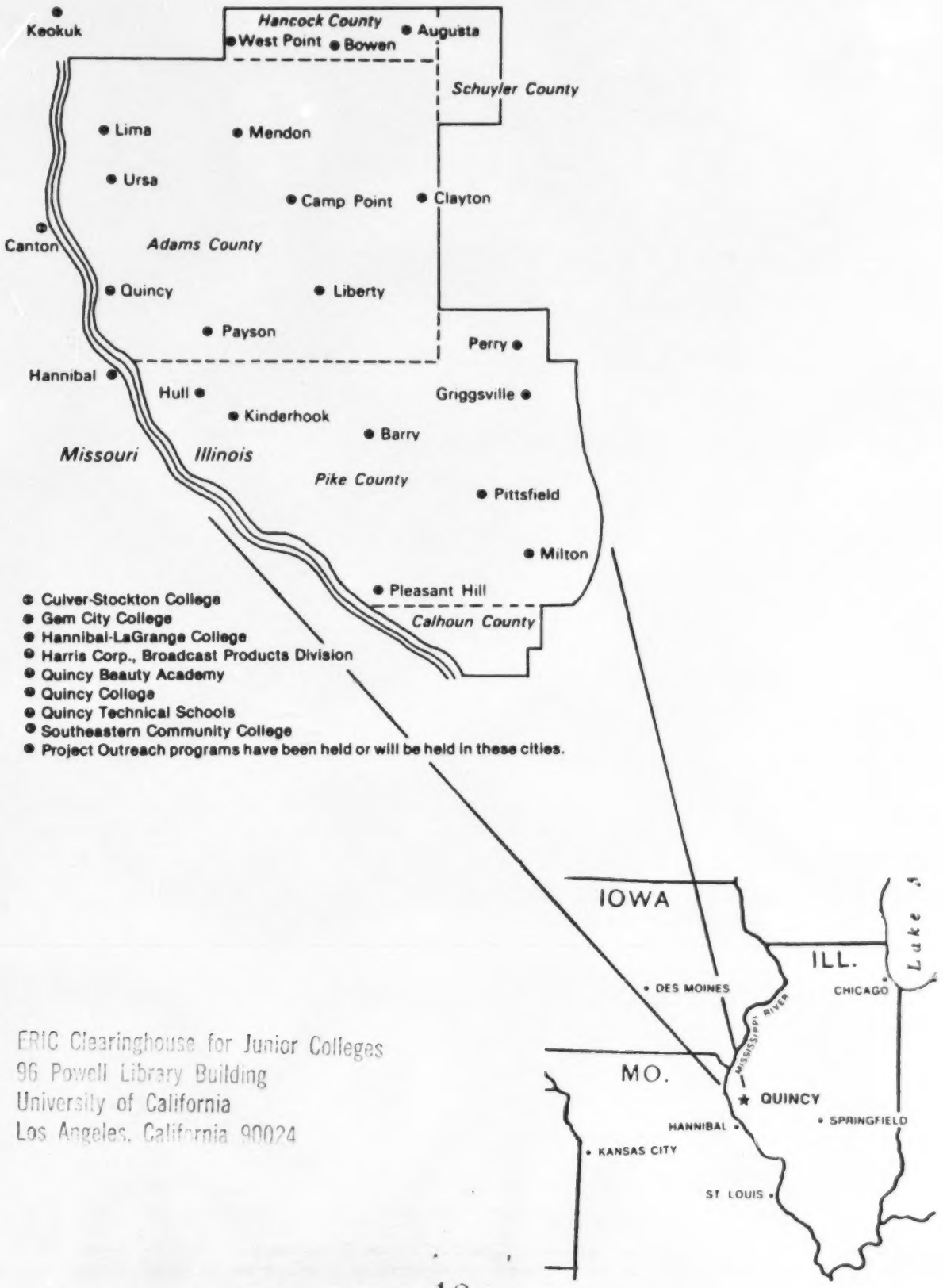
Vocational education must face many challenges in the near future. Pressures from many directions place public education under the burden of higher accountability standards than in the past. Institutions which demonstrate pragmatic approaches to program delivery will be more successful than those who stay with traditional delivery systems.

John Wood Community College has developed a promising future in contractual delivery. Five years of impressive growth, documented cost effectiveness, and a history of student successes have shown that the contractual concept is sound for the College.

While JWCC has developed in a fairly unique environment, the strong belief of the vocational staff is that the model is adaptable to almost any situation. The "common market" concept is a viable alternative delivery system which overcomes many traditional barriers to quality vocational programs. The "common market" will have a place in education in the 1980's.

This monograph on the common market delivery of agriculture programs utilized by John Wood Community College was developed for the American Vocational Association's 1980 Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. For further information, you are invited to contact Jim Upchurch-Dean of Occupational Education, or Larry Fischer-Director of Agriculture Programs, or Jim Balzer-Facilitator of Agriculture Programs at John Wood Community College, 1919 N. 18th Street, Quincy, Illinois, 62301 - Telephone 217-224-6500.

John Wood Community College District 539 Map



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